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Written Testimony in Support of S.B. No 1055 (Raised)  
AN ACT CONCERNING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

To Members the Education Committee:

As a former secondary educator and current educational consultant, who has taught students at *all* achievement levels and who also has trained teachers at a leading graduate school of education, I wholeheartedly support S.B. No 1055 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS.

With the now decades-old standardized testing focus and initiatives brought about by No Child Left Behind, Connecticut's classroom teachers have been unfairly burdened with instructional demands that not only stifle some educators' innovation and creativity, but also force them to "teach to the middle" in heterogeneous classrooms.

Gifted and talented students often sit in classes bored and under-challenged. While the needs of such students from educated and/or affluent families may be met by extracurricular and often expensive programming, huge populations of unidentified and underserved students languish in classroom settings with their talents untapped. All too often, teachers are at a loss as to how to meet these students' needs because they either have little knowledge of new and innovative strategies and methodologies that will excite these learners, and/or because they do not have time or resources to explore this learning on their own.

Connecticut's teachers need a specialist in gifted and talented pedagogy at the State Department of Education, who not only will serve both as a resource and continuing advocate for gifted and talent students and for those who work with them, but who also can advocate for instructional strategies and best practices that promise to raise the interest and achievement levels of *all* learners.